

Cross-Training Within the Project Team by Owen Gadenken

Background

Project teams are often hampered by internal conflicts between team members from different functional organizations. What happens is that team members form stereotypes and make snap judgments about what their colleagues are doing and why. This conflict typically occurs between technical project members and contractors. To prevent this kind of conflict from undermining the project, I believe it is helpful to set up short cross-functional training sessions that allow project team members to explain the key elements of their job to the other members of the project team. The intent of these sessions is to: (1) establish closer cross-functional working relationships among project team members; (2) identify dysfunctional gaps and overlaps between team members; (3) raise the general level of project knowledge among team members; and (4) raise the level of trust and openness among all project team members.



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Procedures

1. The project manager sets up a series of team meetings over the course of the project for each team member to summarize his or her role on the project.
2. A format is established that includes the team member's major responsibilities, key inputs from other project team members and outsiders, and key outputs to the others and to the project itself.

3. The project manager (or designated focal point) convenes each session with a brief review of the project goals, asks one or more team members to make their presentations, and then facilitates a discussion of issues and actions to improve the interface between all team members.

4. This process continues as the project progresses so that team members have periodic opportunities to brief each other on their contributions and discuss their working relationship.

APPL
ASK

"Go for the Stars" oil by P.A. Nisbet depicts the essence of a launch.

